

Housebreaking a New Dog!

*Help your dog learn that your house
is not a toilet!*



Age doesn't matter! For some dogs, house-training can already be started by learning from their mother. However, in most cases, when you bring a dog into a new environment, or especially if you have adopted your dog from a shelter, they will need (at least) reminders. The same steps in house-training a puppy can be used in house-training an adult dog. They present different challenges and some aspects are stressed more than others.

Before we start, be sure to rule out a medical issue!

First and foremost, if you've had your dog for a number of years and/or they were house broken but started having accidents in the home, your first step would be *to take your dog to the vet*, as a simple and inexpensive medical issue such as a urinary tract infection may be the cause for a housebroken dog to start eliminating inside.

Here are some steps and tips to help house-train your dog!

- **Consistency is key:** Daily consistency is the key to a housebroken dog. Feeding time and outside potty time should be done roughly at the same time every day. Dogs learn well by repetition. By developing a routine, you're teaching your dog repetition of behavior, thus making them expect food and potty breaks at certain times. It is important that during the house-training phase of training, you do not break from this routine on weekends/days off/holidays.
- **Have indoor rules:** Your dog needs to learn from you that there are rules and boundaries in the home. During the house-training phase of training, your dog should not be left unsupervised with full run of the home. Instead, when you need a break or cannot be with your dog, place them in an enclosed area (baby gates may work) or a crate.
- **Make sure you have scheduled potty breaks:** During house-training, dogs should go out first thing in the morning, first thing when you get home, immediately following meals, after long play sessions, or when waking up from a nap. For some dogs, you may need to bring them outside every 30 minutes for a few days, then switch it to every hour, and so on until they are used to the routine.

- **Stay calm and focused:** Dogs will have accidents. As people, we have access to our bathroom at all times. Dogs have to wait for their people to take them out. That means knowing the signals your dog gives you that indicate they have to eliminate. Scolding a dog after they've had an accident does not teach them, they actually have no idea why they're being scolded. If you catch your dog in the act, attempt to just distract them with a noise, interrupt them and immediately bring them outside. If you discover a mess after the fact, there is no sense punishing your dog for the accident, as they will have no idea what you are punishing them for (dogs live in the moment and will not associate present yelling with a past behavior).
- **Clean it up right away & be thorough:** Have proper cleaning supplies readily available. Natural stain and odor remover is handy and can break down the odors from the soiled areas. If a dog starts to associate the scent of their waste in an area of the home, they can become used to using that area. Remember – even if you can no longer smell it, your dog probably can! A cleaner with enzymes (ex: Nature's Miracle) will solve this problem.
- **Stay committed:** Some dogs will take longer than others to house-train. This is often dependent on the owner and how consistent they're willing to be. If you create boundaries and limitations, and utilize tools such as crates and baby gates, successful house-training often can be accomplished in a few weeks.
- **Make potty time a celebration:** Remember to praise your dog each and every time they go potty outside. During their house-training, don't be embarrassed to over-exaggerate the praise. Do not yell at your dog for going in the house, as they will not know why they're in trouble. Keep consistent and your dog will get there!



www.phillynokill.org

DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY: Any advice provided by Citizens for a No-Kill Philadelphia ("CNKP") is for informational purposes only. The Community Help Desk is managed by volunteers of CNKP and does not necessarily represent the views of CNKP. Behavior and training advice and suggestions provided through its Help Desk are not intended to be a substitute for the advice of a professional animal trainer or qualified animal behaviorist. Any and all advice from CNKP regarding housing assistance, surrender prevention, or veterinary referrals is to be used for informational purposes only and does not substitute for the advice of a professional. CNKP expressly disclaims any and all liability, expressed or implied, with respect to the service and advice received via its Help Desk. Your reliance on the advice provided and/or content of CNKP's website or Help Desk communications is solely at your own risk.